People and Culture Committee

Wednesday 1 March 2023, 10.00am -11.50am

Minutes

Present Members:
Miss Donna Dalrymple (Chair); Ms Kate Brooks; Ms Georgina Cade; Ms Sara Collins; Ms Natalie Conway; Professor Peter Fonagy; Ms Christine Forde; Mr Felipe Fouto; Ms Marie Gallagher; Mrs Megan Gerrie; Professor Paola Lettieri; Ms Fiona Naughton; Mr Andy Smith; Professor Anthony Smith; Dr Jolene Skordis; Ms Tania Trosini; Ms Donna Williamson; Ms Joanne Wilkes; Professor Steve Wilson

Apologies:
Professor Kathleen Armour; Dr Tim Beasley-Murray; Mr Paul Clark; Professor Geraint Rees; Mr Martin Wedlake; Professor Martin Oliver; Professor Steven Vaughan; Ms Harriet Lilley; Professor Jennifer Hudson

In attendance:
Ms Rebecca Edwards; Ms Becky Horrocks; Mr Charles Marson; Mr Stuart McLellan; Ms Lorren Rea; Mr Mark Rice; Ms Emma Todd

Officer:
Ms Hannah Swallow (Secretary)

Part I: Preliminary Business

1.   Minutes (2-01)

1.1.   People and Culture Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held by the People and Culture Committee on Friday 11 November 2022. There were no matters arising.

2.   Updates to PCC membership (2-02)

2.1.   Miss Donna Dalrymple, Chief People Officer (Chair) confirmed the updates had been made to the membership and welcomed the new members to the committee.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

3.   HR Function – Aligning the profession (2-03)

3.1.   Mr Stuart McLellan, Head of HR for transformation provided an update on the work being carried out as part of the HR Function Development initiative, within the wider UCL PS Function Development programme. The following points were made during the presentation:

    a.   The work is part of wider activity to look at professional services functions across UCL and key enabling priorities under the strategic plan.

    b.   The programme wants to work with faculties for closer coordination to ensure services delivered more efficiently, without duplication and with clear leadership and direction.

    c.   A steering group has been set up and is currently in the mobilisation phase, plans to start discovery work and look at quick wins for service improvement.

    d.   The steering group is looking for volunteers, particularly from research and technical community. People and Culture Committee was asked to recommend relevant members.

3.2.   The following points were raised in discussion:

    a.   It was asked whether clinical academics are represented on the steering group as they will have very specific issues which should be raised at the group. It was confirmed that as of yet there is not, but keen for them to be included. A clinical academic contact was suggested which will be followed up.

    b.   It was advised that updates from this programme of work will be received at the committee going forwards. It will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

    c.   It was noted that the proposed operating model will be shared with the committee for consultation.

3.3.   People and Culture Committee noted the review and agreed an update should be brought to next meeting.

4.   The Future of Work at UCL – New Hybrid Working Guidance and Academic, Teaching and Research staff (2-04)

4.1.   Charles Marson, Head of HR (Life & Medical Sciences and VP Health) presented an update on the application of raised hybrid working guidance for academic, teaching and research staff. The following points were made during the presentation:

    a.   Ahead of the revised hybrid working guidance implementation in October 2022, concerns were raised by University Management Committee (UMC) as to whether it was appropriate to apply the guidance to Academic, Teaching and Research staff.

b.   This latest update brings together all the guidance for all staff.

4.2.   The following points were raised in discussion:
a.   The updated guidance was positively received by People and Culture Committee.
b.   It was raised that office spaces for academic staff need to be considered creatively to create a sense of belonging, flexibility and value.
c.   It was shared how the UCL East office areas have been developed differently with open plan spaces fitted out for staff with a variety of functions such as private space, collaboration and social spaces. Consideration has been taken to the different stages of academic career and how this may affect the type of space that is required.
d.   It was advised that this is not necessarily the final set of working guidance as it will need to be developed further as it comes into practice, how staff respond, and which aspects are successful.
e.   Any further updates shall be brought to People and Culture Committee.

4.3.   The latest guidance was approved by People and Culture Committee.

5.   UCL's 22/23 Gender, Ethnicity and Disability pay gap report (2-05)

5.1.   Mark Rice, Director of Reward presented the data from the UCL's 22/23 Gender, Ethnicity and Disability pay gap report. The following points were made during the presentation:
a.   It was raised that Gender and Ethnicity are required reports. Disability is not a required report and is not widely reported across institutions.
b.   It was advised that the Gender report shows positive progress. The mean gap has reduced, median gap has shifted and pay within grades does not show significant gaps.
c.   It was noted that Postgraduate teaching assistants can skew the data
d.   There has not been the same positive movement in the ethnicity report. There has been a marginal increase in BAME at grades 8-10. However, there is a large number of unknown ethnicities, and this number has increased so this affects the data.
e.   It was noted that this year's Disability data is the first year so it cannot be benchmarked against previous years.
f.   It was advised that an action plan has been created and there will be work with faculties locally to improve gaps at faculty level.

5.2.   The following points were raised in discussion:
a.   It was raised that there have been some issues with the accelerate to leadership programme and advertising roles on talent link. This is an area that could benefit from further discussion and investigation. Angela Clark, Head of Recruitment shall provide an update for the next committee meeting on the accelerate to leadership programme.

b. It was raised that although it is useful to have the figures across all staff, it would be good to have the breakdown across academic, research and PS staff. It was confirmed that this will be done when the team approach faculties, but this is the public facing report.

c. It was noted that Inside UCL can be used by staff to update their individual data which will help improve the accuracy of these reports. This will be promoted to all staff to encourage keeping information up to date.

d. It was suggested that UCL East recruitment and selection practices can be seen as a good example. By starting with clean slate at UCL East, it has been possible to try new things to recruit more diverse staff.

5.3. People and Culture Committee approved the report.

6. Voluntary Resignation Scheme (Verbal Update)

6.1. Stuart McLellan, Head of HR for Transformation, presented an update on the voluntary resignation scheme. The following points were made during the presentation:

a. It was advised that the scheme closed on 15 January 2023. There were 304 eligible applications, and 263 applications were approved. Decisions have now been communicated and the offers have been made. This will release 7.4m of savings across UCL

b. It was noted that in the current analysis of uptake of scheme, there has been no concerning patterns. The most likely group to take up the scheme have been older staff.

c. It was advised that a full review of the scheme will take place and a lessons learnt exercise once it has been completed. The team also intends to undertake exit interviews with those completing the scheme. Exit trends shall also be monitored over the next few months to see how this scheme has affected normal turnover rates.

6.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

a. The committee agreed that exit interviews could be useful.

b. It was suggested that the data should be refined once the scheme is finalised.

6.3. People and Culture Committee noted the update on the scheme.

7. Athena Swan Proposals (2-06)

7.1. Christine Forde, Interim Executive EDI Consultant & Director of EDI presented the proposals for Athena Swan. The following points were made during the presentation:

a. The committee were asked to approve the proposal. Ultimately, UMC will be endorsing the proposal.

b. UCL has been Involved with Athena Swan from the very beginning as one of the founding universities and is seeking a gold award in due course. UCL currently has 49 departmental accreditations.
c. It was confirmed that the updated scheme is more flexible and requires less data which should make it easier for faculties and departments to engage.
d. It was noted that Athena Swan can continue to be used to support EDI and representation

7.2. The following points were raised in discussion:
a. It was asked how this proposal affects the departments who have existing arrangements. It was confirmed that those on existing arrangements will continue during the transitionary period and the new standard will come in from next year.
b. Concerns were raised that some support and resources has been cut for Athena Swan work across faculties. It was noted that it is difficult to comment on departmental resources or central resources, but it was confirmed that there is now a full time Athena swan manager starting who will be able to support through toolkits and working directly with departments.
c. There have also been developments with data collection on tableau so it should be easier and analysis more robust. However, there were some concerns raised that tableau could create administrative burden on staff.
d. It was noted that in previous years, departments were concerned by the large amount of work that needed to be undertaken to gather the relevant information when it could have available centrally. This should be relieved by the appointment of a central manager with the ability to coordinate the data. A charter committee has also been set up which can address these issues, remove duplication and streamline processes.

7.3. People and Culture Committee approved the proposal taking into account the updated resources and support for departments in future.

Hannah Swallow
March 2023